MY SHORT STORY WILL SLITHER INTO THE CREVICES OF YOUR HEART

TO LIVE

AONO SHUNJUU

IN HER FIRST WORK SINCE WINNING THE 17TH ANNUAL IKIMAN AWARD

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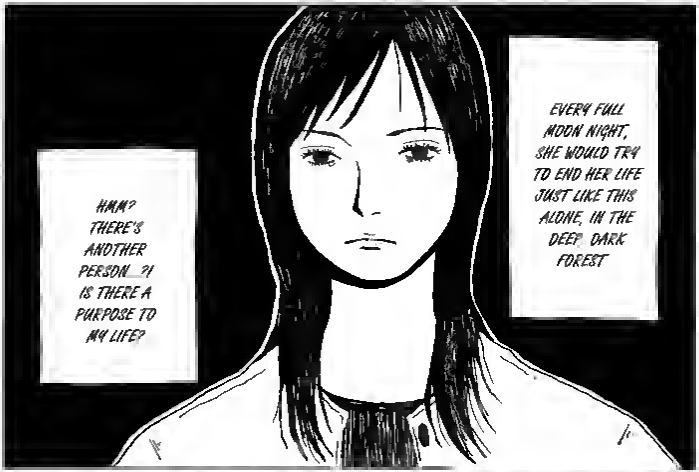
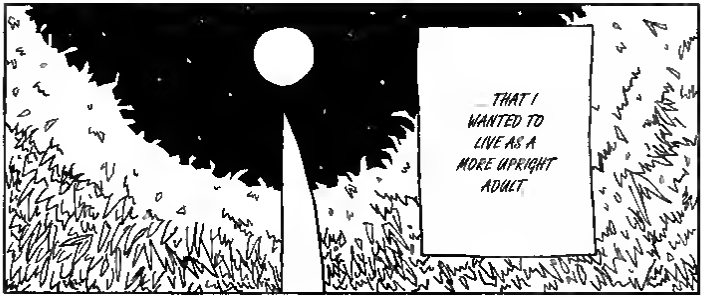
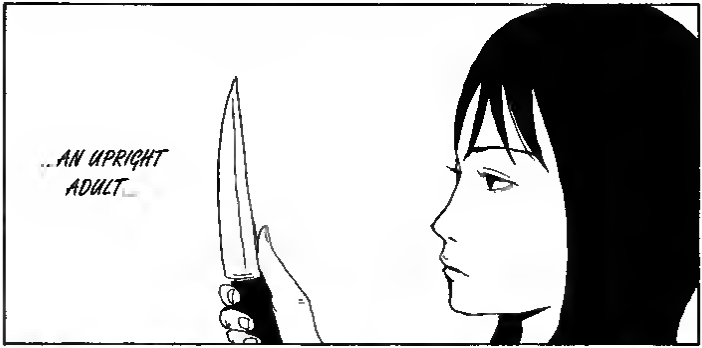

EVERY FULL MOON NIGHT, SHE WOULD TRY TO END HER LIFE JUST LIKE THIS ALONE, IN THE DEEP, DARK FOREST
HMM? THERE'S ANOTHER PERSON...?! IS THERE A PURPOSE TO MY LIFE?

2

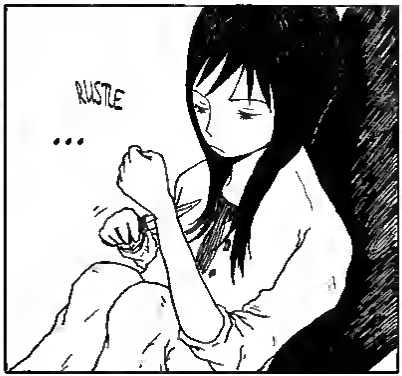
...I DON'T THINK THERE'S A SPECIAL PURPOSE IT'S JUST...

TO LIVE

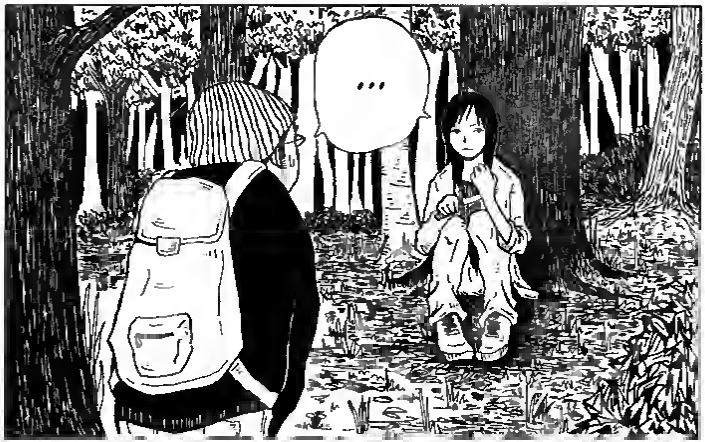




SFX: PSHH PSSHHH



...
PSHHHH
SHHH
PSHHH
4
WHA...N!
SHOCK
SHIZU
HUH?!
SHIZUO
HUMPH
ARGH!!
SHHH
SHAKE
SHAKE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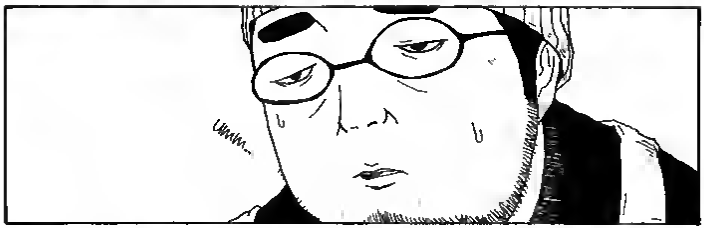
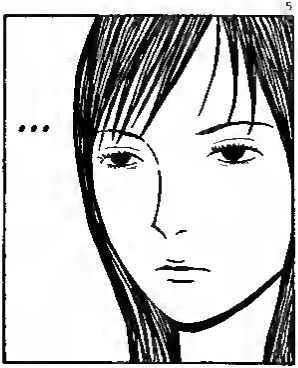

Uhhhh...

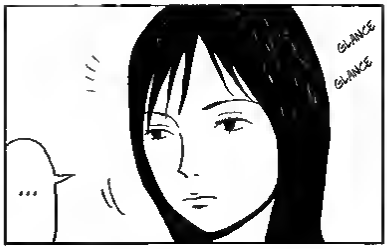
TAP
TAP
TAP

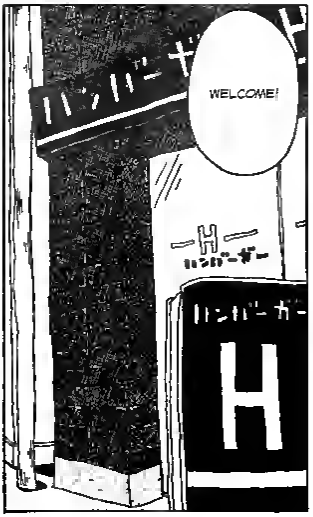
Oh, no!
Ah!
$HIZUO
I'LL BE GOING NOW!

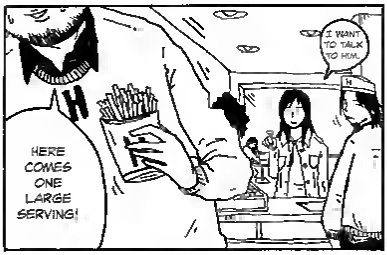

...

SFX: HOOT HOOT
...
ホー
ホー
...
6
...
SHIZ
WHAT IS IT?

... LEAVE ME ALONE. I HAVE NOTHING TO DO WITH YOU.
BUT, YOU KNOW IT'S TROUBLING
?
As a human being
I JUST THOUGHT, WHY DON'T I STOP YOU?
WELL ...
SHIZUO
rustle
... MY TRAUMA
IT MIGHT BECOME MY, YOU KNOW...


GLANCE
GLANCE
...


WELCOME!
H
ハンバーガー
H


I WANT TO TALK TO HIM.
HERE COMES ONE LARGE SERVING!

...
WHO IS HE?

SOME-ONE'S HERE TO SEE YOU
MANAGER!
YES?

OH!
T2222

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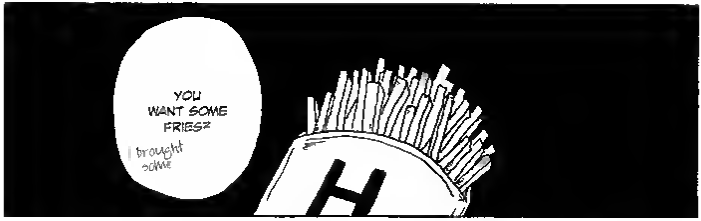
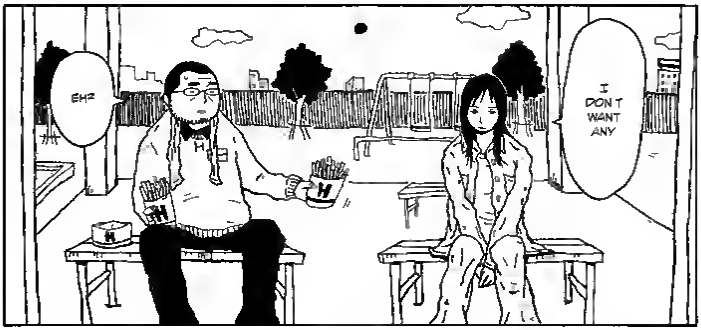
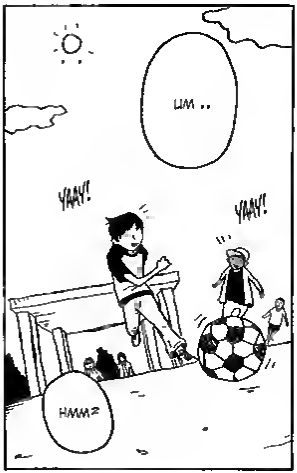

YOU WANT SOME FRIES?
I brought some


EH?
I DON'T WANT ANY


UM ..
YAAY!
YAAY!
HMM?

I SEE.
There are more

THAT'S
I was worried.
COULD YOU PLEASE STOP CALLING ME, ALREADY?
Every day, too
I WON'T DIE SOON, ANYWAY.
For now
Just what do you mean by it?
BESIDES, JUST WHAT DO YOU KNOW ABOUT ME?
YOU'RE THE MANAGER OF A FAST FOOD RESTAURANT!
H
OH, THAT'S A NICKNAME
WHA-?
THAT'S MY PART-TIME JOB.
The real manager's even younger.

PART-TIME JOB?
IN TRAINING
DAIKOKU
H
OH, BUT FOR NOW I HAVE A REAL JOB ELSEWHERE
... WHAT IS IT?
Your real job

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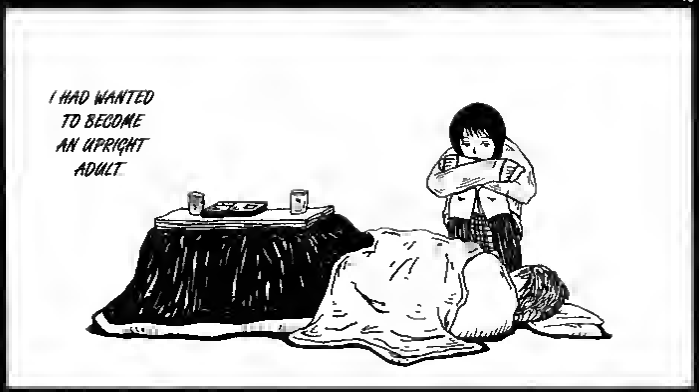
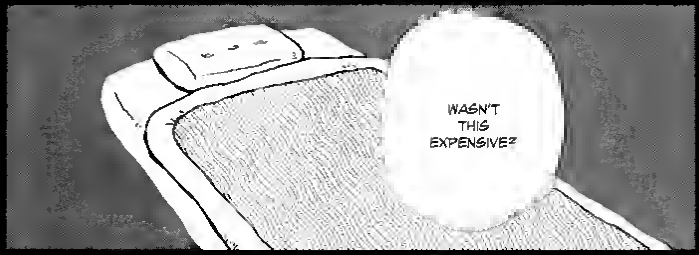
... MANGAKA.
THE TRUTH IS, DESPITE HOW I LOOK, I'M ACTUALLY A...
H
11
DON'T MAKE FUN OF ME.
OR AT LEAST, AIMING TO BE ONE
Something like that?
NO, I'M SERIOUS
DO YOU THINK I'M AN IDIOT?
I'LL BET MY LIFE ON IT; MY LIFE!!
I'M LEAVING

I'M HOME.
I THOUGHT I WAS AN ORDINARY GIRL.
AND I THOUGHT THAT THE FUTURE WOULD COME WHEN IT CAME
Jeez.
IT WAS FUN GROWING UP.
NOT TO MENTION, I NEVER THOUGHT ABOUT MY PURPOSE FOR LIVING.

ZZZ
ZZZ
ONE OF THOSE "LIVE FOR THE MOMENT" KIDS.
I WAS JUST
BUT...


I HAD WANTED TO BECOME AN UPRIGHT ADULT


WASN'T THIS EXPENSIVE?

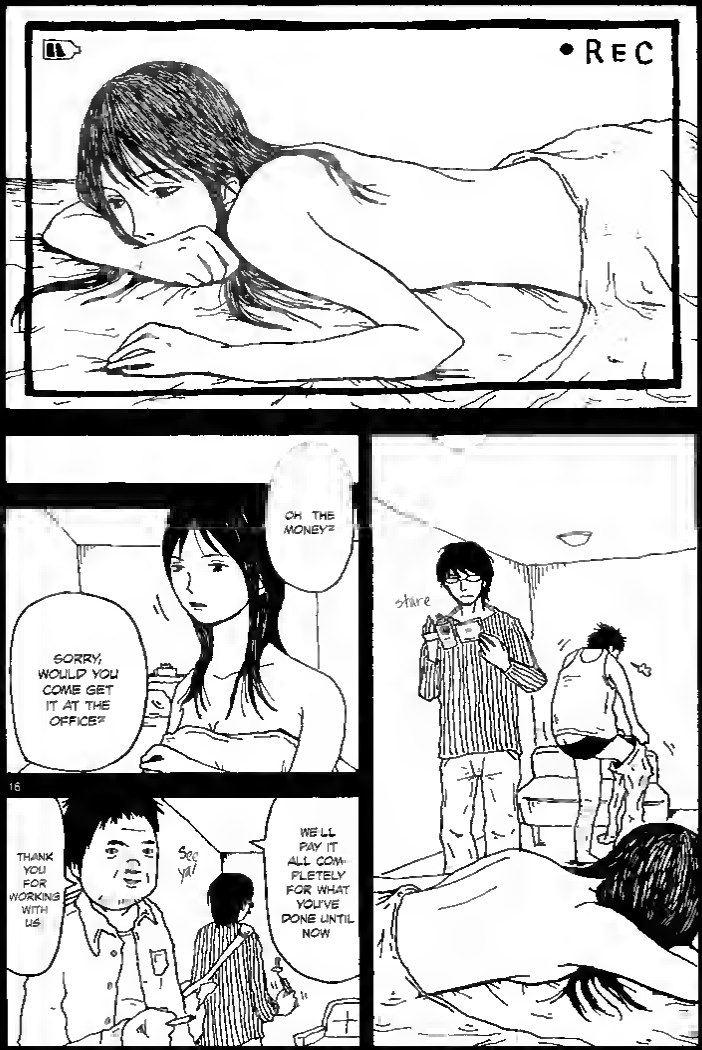
THAT FUTON'S MADE OF SPECIAL MATERIALS.
THEY SAY YOU WON'T BE TIRED ANYMORE JUST FROM SLEEPING IN IT

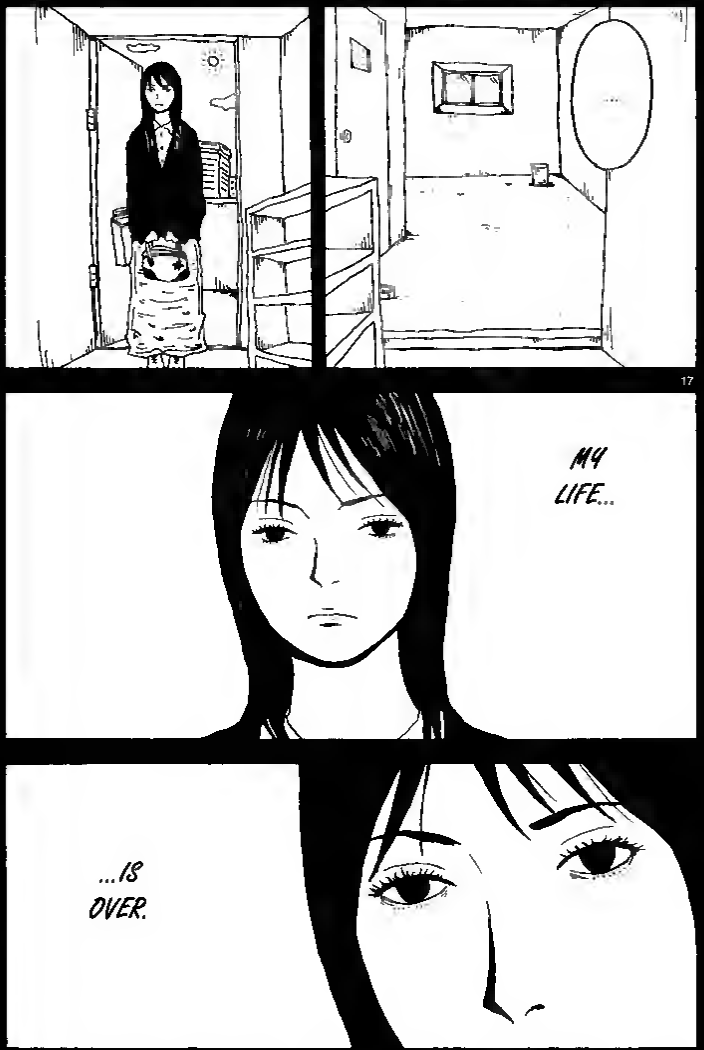
I HAD WORKED FOR A WHILE.
IT'S ALL RIGHT

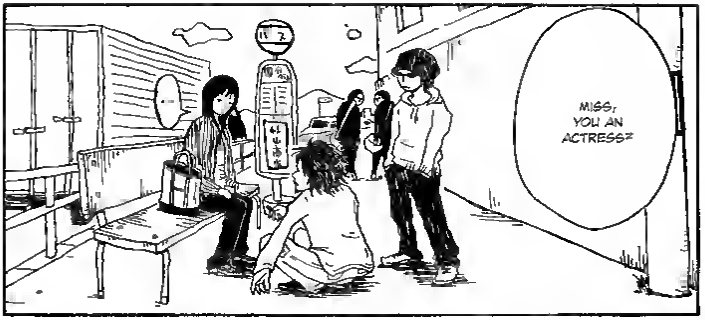
I WANTED TO SEE MY FATHER'S JOYOUS FACE!

IT WAS 30,000 YEN...
YUKIKO... THANK YOU!

WHAT?! DOWN PAYMENT?
NO, I DON'T COME TO HERE.
THAT WAS ALL...
15
"MISS!"
1,500,000 YEN
DO YOU WANT SOME MONEY?
BEEP
BEEP

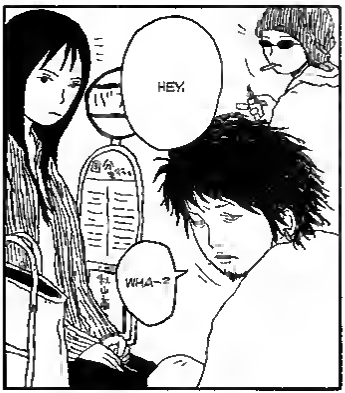

• REC
OH THE MONEY?
SORRY, WOULD YOU COME GET IT AT THE OFFICE?
stare
THANK YOU FOR WORKING WITH US
See ya!
WE'LL PAY IT ALL COMPLETELY FOR WHAT YOU'VE DONE UNTIL NOW


17
MY LIFE...
...IS OVER.


MISS, YOU AN ACTRESS?

MY, BUT YOU LOOK EXACTLY ALIKE.
I'm a Fan!
WHERE YA GOING? LET'S HAVE SOME FUN!

AREN'T YOU?!
NO, I'M NOT.


HEY.
WHA--?

HEY, LET'S GO ALL THE WAY.
YOU ACTED IN A PORN VIDEO, DIDN'T YOU?

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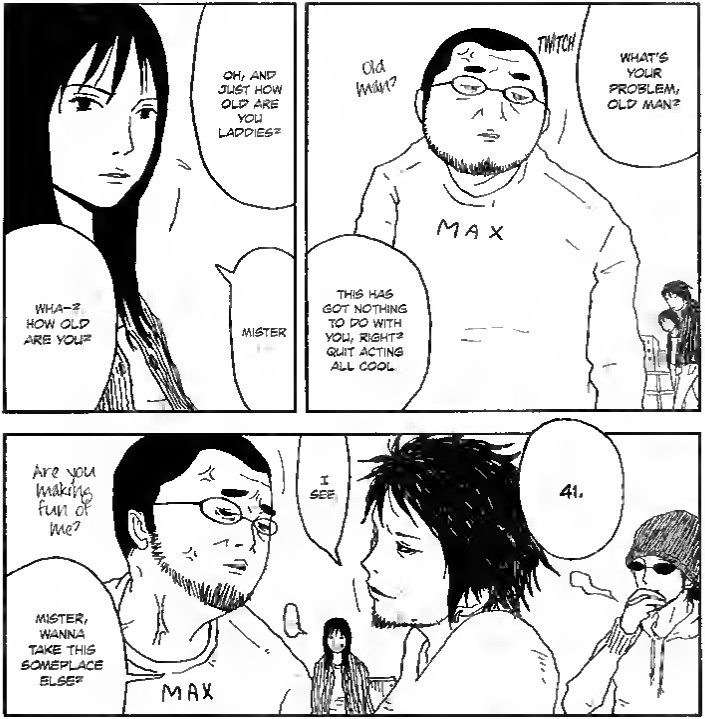
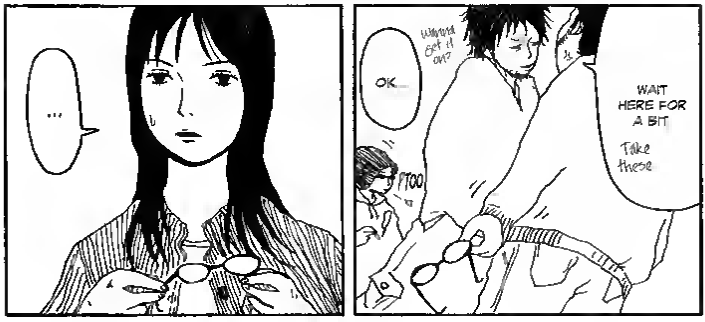
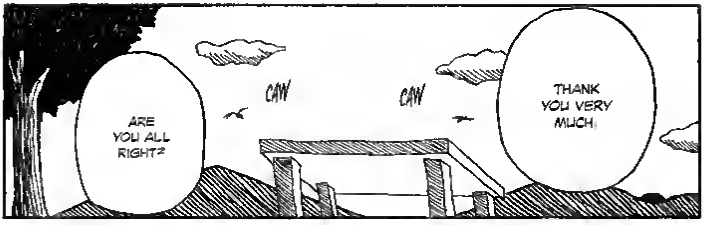
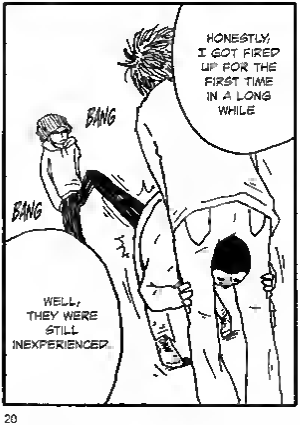
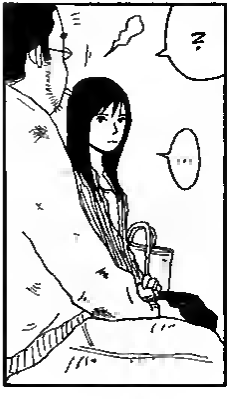

OH, AND JUST HOW OLD ARE YOU LADDIES?
MISTER
WHA-? HOW OLD ARE YOU?
TWITCH
WHAT'S YOUR PROBLEM, OLD MAN?
Old man?
MAX
THIS HAS GOT NOTHING TO DO WITH YOU, RIGHT? QUIT ACTING ALL COOL
Are you making fun of me?
I SEE
41.
MISTER, WANNA TAKE THIS SOMEPLACE ELSE?
MAX

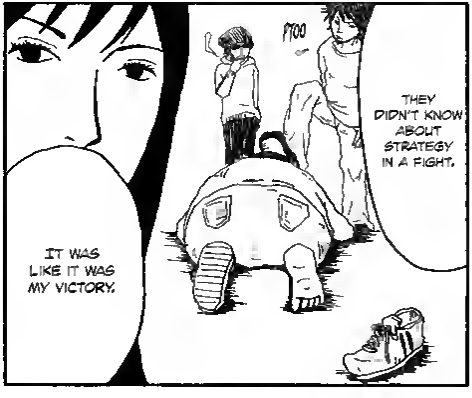

...
OK
Where did it go?
PTOO
WAIT HERE FOR A BIT
Take these


ARE YOU ALL RIGHT?
CAW
CAW
THANK YOU VERY MUCH!


HONESTLY, I GOT FIRED UP FOR THE FIRST TIME IN A LONG WHILE
BANG
BANG
WELL, THEY WERE STILL INEXPERIENCED.

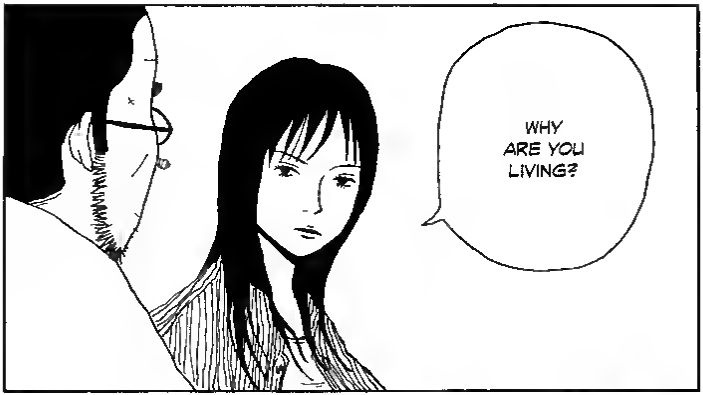
It looks worse than it feels.
Heh heh!
DON'T WORRY ABOUT IT!
I WAS KNOWN IN THE PAST FOR ENDURING BEATINGS.

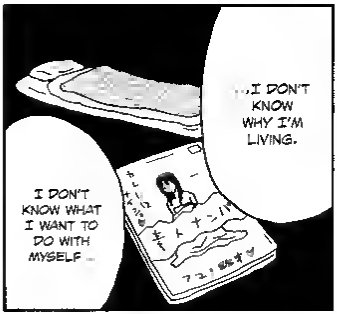

?
...


IT WAS LIKE IT WAS MY VICTORY.
PTOO
THEY DIDN'T KNOW ABOUT STRATEGY IN A FIGHT.

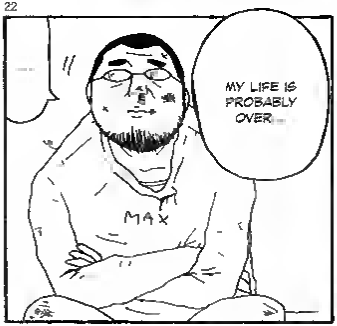
生きる

...
...
POOF
POOF
WANNA KISS?
NO, I DON'T
YEAH, YOU'RE RIGHT...
MISTER,
CAN I ASK YOU SOMETHING?
TURN
YEAH, ASK ANYTHING YOU WANT!


WHY ARE YOU LIVING?


I DON'T KNOW WHAT I WANT TO DO WITH MYSELF...
...I DON'T KNOW WHY I'M LIVING.

MAX


MY LIFE IS PROBABLY OVER...
MAX

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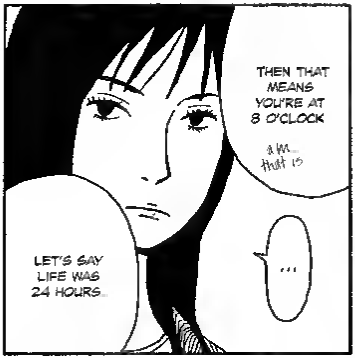
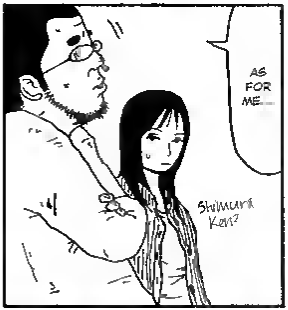
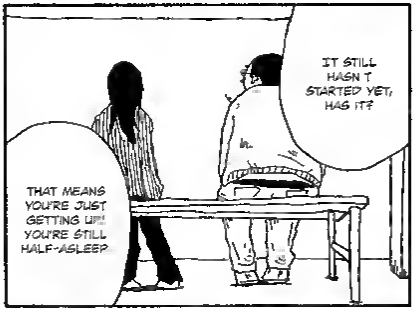

LET'S SAY LIFE WAS 24 HOURS.
...
THEN THAT MEANS YOU'RE AT 8 O'CLOCK
A.M. that is
CAW CAW
?
IT'S 8.
DIVIDE YOUR AGE BY 3.


AS FOR ME...
Shimura Ken?


IT STILL HASN'T STARTED YET, HAS IT?
THAT MEANS YOU'RE JUST GETTING UP! YOU'RE STILL HALF-ASLEEP

I'LL SOON BE AT 2 P.M.
IT'S A GOOD TIME... THE SUN'S SHINING BRIGHTLY.
HOWEVER, I'M UNFORTUNATELY LYING UNDERGROUND...